

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 03012 171320Z

50

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 085812

O 171140Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3749

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

USSAG NKP THAI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SAIGON 3012

EXDIS - MILITARY COMMANDS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

NOFORN

WARNING -- SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS
INVOLVED/NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2 DECLASSIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE - SUMMARY FOR PERIOD ENDING
NOON MARCH 17

1. GENERAL:

THE FOCUSES ON FIGHTING IN VIETNAM AS OF THE MORNING OF MARCH 17 WERE IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF MR-2 AND IN THE EASTERN PORTION OF MR-3. IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY THE FIGHTING WAS GENERALLY MODERATE. THE EVACUATION OF GVN FORCES FROM PLEIKU AND KONTUM ORDERED MARCH 14 BY PRESIDENT THIEU IS REPORTED WELL UNDERWAY. ATTACKS IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MARCH 17 SIGNALLED THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND PHASE OF MAJOR ACTIVITY IN LONG KHANH AND BINH TUY PROVINCES OF MR-3. THE CITIES OF GIA RAY, HOAI DUC AND DINH QUAN, LOCATED ON OR NEAR STRATEGIC ROUTES 1, 333 AND 20 ALL RECEIVED GROUND ATTACKS.

2. HIGHLANDS:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAIGON 03012 171320Z

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 14, DURING A MEETING WITH COMMANDERS OF I AND II CORPS, PRESIDENT THIEU DECIDED TO EVACUATE REGULAR ARVN FORCES FROM PLEIKU AND KONTUM PROVINCES IN ORDER TO SHORTEN ARVN'S LINE OF DEFENSE. THE THINLY STRETCHED ARVN FORCES IN THE HIGHLANDS ARE CONSIDERABLY OUTMANNED AND OUTGUNNED BY THE ATTACKING NVA DIVISIONS. MOREOVER, ALL MAJOR HIGHWAYS INTO THE HIGHLANDS HAVE BEEN CUT BY THE COMMUNIST FORCES AND HEAVY, PROLONGED FIGHTING WILL BE NECESSARY TO REOPEN THEM.

ON MARCH 15, THE II CORPS COMMANDER AND THE CORPS STAFF MOVED TO NHA TRANG WHERE MR-2 HEADQUARTERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN LOCATED. MOVEMENT OF ARVN FORCES FROM PLEIKU AND KONTUM IS NOW WELL UNDERWAY. THE EVACUATION ROUTE RUNS FROM PLEIKU TO CHEO REO IN PHU BON PROVINCE AND THENCE BY HWY 7B TO PHU YEN. ALL REGULAR ARVN FORCES HAVE DEPARTED KONTUM, LEAVING ONLY THE PROVINCE CHIEF, HIS RF AND PF, AND 6 TUBES OF ARTILLERY TO DEFEND THE CITY. REFUGEES ARE REPORTED TO BE STREAMING FROM PLEIKU AND KONTUM TOWARD OTHER CITIES IN THE REGION.

IN DARLAC PROVINCE TANK-LED NVA FORCES REPORTEDLY OVERRAN PHUOC AN DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS APPROXIMATELY 30 MILES EAST OF BAN ME THUOT; AND THE CP OF THE ARVN 45TH RGT, WHICH WITH THE 44TH RGT AND 21ST RANGERS WAS TO ATTACK AND RETAKE BAN ME THUOT, HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE EAST ALONG HWY 21. BAN ME THUOT EAST AIRFIELD WHICH HAD BEEN HELD BY ELEMENTS OF THE 23RD ARVN DIVISION MAY HAVE FALLEN TO THE NVA. GVN FORCES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CLEAR THE ENEMY FROM THE MOUNTAIN PASSES ON HWY 21 BETWEEN KHANH HOA AND DARLAC PROVINCES. THE COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO CONTROL THE STRATEGIC HILL 519 AND ARE WELL SUPPORTED BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ARTILLERY. ARVN 23RD DIVISION COMMANDER LE TRUNG TUONG WAS WOUNDED IN HIS HELICOPTER WHILE DIRECTING THE BATTLE IN THIS AREA.

3. MR-3:

THE SECOND PHASE OF NVA/VC ACTIVITY IN EASTERN MR-3 BEGAN EARLY MARCH 17 IN BINH TUY AND LONG KHANH PROVINCES. NVA FORCES LAUNCHED EARLY MORNING GROUND ATTACKS AGAINST THE CITIES OF DINH QUAN, HOAI DUC (VO DAT), AND GIA RAY, LOCATED ON OR NEAR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 03012 171320Z

STRATEGIC ROUTES 20, 333, AND 1. A GROUND ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE JUNCTION OF ROUTES 1 AND 333 SOUTH OF GIA RAY, XUAN LOC, ASTRIDE ROUTE 1 IN LONG KHANH, RECEIVED A 105 MM ABF. SUCCESS IN THESE ATTACKS WOULD MEAN THAT THE ONLY REMAINING ROAD ROUTES BETWEEN MRS 2 AND 3 WOULD BE CUT. THE NVA/VC NOW CONTROL ALL OF TAY NINH PROVINCE WEST OF THE VAM CO RIVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A SMALL PERIMETER ON ROUTE 1 WEST OF GO DAU HA. FROM THIS POSITION, THE COMMUNISTS WILL BE ABLE TO ABF

ROUTE 1 AT WILL, MAKING ROAD REINFORCEMENT OF TAY NINH EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. BIEN HOA AIRBASE HAS COME UNDER ROCKET ATTACK THE MORNINGS OF MARCH 16 AND 17.

4. MR-1:

FIGHTING IN MR-1 WAS GENERALLY MODERATE, WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE ACTION BELOW THE HAI VAN PASS IN QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI. THE THREAT OF ATTACK IN QUANG TRI HAS GENERATED APPROXIMATELY 80,000 REFUGEES SO FAR. THESE REFUGEES HAVE FLED TO THE CITY OF HUE FOR THE MOST PART, AND ARE CAUSING A RISING FEELING OF UNEASINESS IN HUE. THE QUANG TRI PROVINCE CHIEF EXPECTS FURTHER ATTACKS THERE, AND IS SOMEWHAT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE GVN'S CHANCES OF HOLDING THE PROVINCE.

5. MR-4:

FIGHTING IN THE DELTA REMAINED GENERALLY LIGHT AND SCATTERED.

6. ICCS:

A NUMBER OF ICCS TEAM SITES HAVE BEEN EVACUATED BY ONE OR MORE TEAMS IN THE PAST 48 HOURS. THE TEAM SITE AT QUANG TRI IS REPORTEDLY UNMANNED, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR THE WEEKEND. ALL FOUR DELEGATIONS HAVE EVACUATED KONTUM AND PLEIKU. THERE IS NO WORD AS YET ON THE FATE OF THE INDONESIAN AND IRANIAN TEAMS CAUGHT IN BAN ME THUOT. ALL TEAMS HAVE REPORTEDLY WITHDRAWN FROM THE XUAN LOC TEAM SITE. IN ADDITION TO THE SITES ALREADY MENTIONED, THE INDONESIANS, REPORTEDLY TO SHOW THEIR DISPLEASURE WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION, HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR TEAMS FROM THE SITES AT PHU BAI, HAU BON, CU CHI, LAM SON, HONG NHU, TRI TAM, VINH LONG AND QUAN LONG AS OF MARCH 16.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 SAIGON 03012 171320Z

WARNING NOTICE -- SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED/NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION.
LEHMANN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON03012
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2 SIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750092-0619
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750344/aaaabnfy.tel
Line Count: 157
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <27 JUN 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE - SUMMARY FOR PERIOD ENDING NOON MARCH 17
TAGS: MOPS, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006